THE NECESSITY FOR A WORLD STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT

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BY

FRANCIS P. MILLER

"Posterity is an Accumulation of Minorities."—Gounod

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WITHOUT citizens societies cannot exist. A living society is neither an organization nor an institution. Societies may wish to use the services of executive secretaries and committees but the appointment of these is far from being synonymous with the release of vital social forces and their presence does not necessarily imply the existence of a living society. A society is a company of citizens. It is an organic relationship between individuals which makes them conscious of common interests and common ends and inspires them with common loyalties. This applies to the life of the whole world as well as to the life of the smallest local community.

Intelligent men everywhere are agreed that unless a coöperative society of nations shortly comes into being civilization cannot long survive. During the past thirteen years the organization for a world society has been largely perfected. There are countless agencies for international collaboration in the fields of commerce, politics and law. But though the organization for a world society has been created, the society itself does not yet exist. Consequently, the mechanism of international collaboration can only be employed within very narrow limits, and as long as the will of mankind is not entirely committed to that mechanism it is improbable that it could sustain the strain of a first class world crisis. If the machinery of peace is to function the peoples of the world must will it to function. A coöperative world society will not come into be-

ing until there are large numbers of persons in every nation who are conscious of the significance of such a society and who passionately long for its establishment. To make a world society world citizens must first be made. The supreme practical task of our generation is to increase the number of men and women who are vividly conscious of being citizens of the world society in their cares and outlook.

The world society does not exist. It does not exist because in the last analysis its creation requires a transcendental faith—a faith in a world which is totally different from the actual world which we face in these closing months of 1931. Modern man cannot create a world society because however liberal or idealistic his outlook may be he has identified reality with the world as it is. The only universe he knows is the universe closed in by his immediate sense experience. This is the universe to which he has been introduced by the public school system developed under the inspiration of the most enlightened modern theories of education; this is the universe which has been hallowed for him by his state-controlled university; and this is the universe which he accepted after graduation when he identified himself with the dominant forces controlling modern civilization. It is a universe of things which man manufactures. It is a universe of forces which man controls. In short, it is a man-made universe within which man is the measure of all things. Man has projected his own image on to the universe and then called what he saw reality.

This pseudo-universe which man has mistaken for reality does not even comprise the whole of actuality. It is little more than a succession of momentary cross-sections of the time stream within the range of the individual's experience—a kaleidoscopic panorama of fleeting relativities without relation and

without meaning. Little wonder that the man who inhabits such a universe is incapable of creating a world society. He cannot create a world society because the only world he knows is the world of the *status quo*, a world whose ideals are discerned in the necessities of industry,* and whose social sanctions are derived from the procedures of the present rather than from the possibilities of the future.

Enmeshed in the web of the static present, a slave to immediate interests and pressures, modern man does not possess the detachment of mind and spirit necessary for the development of a sound critique of contemporary civilization. Much less does he possess the elevation of thought and feeling equal to dreaming of a new heaven and a new earth. If he is a business man his ideal is to devote himself body and soul to furthering the interests of an industrial capitalism. That is the only universe he knows. And when that universe collapses and betrays him, self annihilation is not infrequently the only answer he is capable of giving. If, on the other hand, he is an intellectual liberal he will most probably succumb to the lure of joining the scientific humanists in their lofty balcony where they are watching the show go by, and will agree with Mr. Lippmann that "whether he saw the thing as comedy, or high tragedy or plain farce, he would affirm that it is what it is, and that the wise man can enjoy it." The conversation of the scientific humanists is often both instructive and amusing but it is obvious that groups of spectators will never introduce a new society.

Because he is so frequently either merely a servitor or a spectator of the world as it is, modern man lacks the resources, the imagination and the faith necessary for the creation of a

*See "A Preface to Morals," p. 258. Walter Lippmann.

world society. If he is a man of action his energies are expended in feverish attempts to devise ingenious adjustments in the machinery of the existing social system for the sake of perpetuating it regardless of its actual social utility. The explanation of this activity is to be found in the nature of man. The central fact in human nature is its need for an absolute. Man must have an absolute. Without an absolute on which to rely he can never really be a man. The development of his powers and faculties and the extent of his creative activity depend to a very large extent upon the kind of absolute he chooses. For his fullest development, man needs to believe in a world of eternal values into which his spirit can from time to time retire and from whose vantage ground he can secure the perspective necessary to see life clearly and see it whole.

But if a man does not believe in another world as the source of his absolute he will find an absolute in this world. He will seize upon some aspect of actuality, some concrete but ephemeral activity or relationship, and by the intellectual interest and emotional loyalty with which he surrounds it force it to assume the functions of an absolute. This general tendency to confuse the relative with the absolute, to deify the relative as if it were an absolute, creates the major spiritual and ethical issues of our time. If there is such a thing as the modern problem this is the crux of it.

In some parts of the world, to be considered modern is synonymous with being thought of as emancipated from all absolutes. We Americans are particularly conscious of the break which exists between our philosophical and religious relativism and the philosophical and religious absolutism of the older European tradition. Yet there is no nation in the world whose people are more susceptible than we are to the appeal of the

absolute. The only distinction that can be made is that instead of our emotional life focusing on some great other-worldly absolute, which gives meaning to society and provides the basis for its culture, we are exposed to and often become the prey of a constant succession of false absolutes, concocted out of momentary pressures of occupational, class or national interests. The devotee of science or the sophisticated intellectual liberal has his absolutes no less than his more naïve fellow-citizen.

The question is not whether it is a good thing for the modern man to choose an absolute, since everyone except the pure spectator has already done so. The question is rather how adequate are the absolutes which have been chosen. Is modern man justified in relying upon such absolutes as the pattern of his economic activity, or the method of his educational process or the destiny of his social collectivity? None of these is in fact an absolute. Each is in its essence a fleeting relativity. Each is the product of human ingenuity in building organizations and formulating procedures. And each is destined to lose its social value progressively from the moment of its adoption, from the moment it ceases to be a dynamic ideal and becomes a stereotyped routine. Such pseudo-absolutes as these belong to the same order as man himself, to the order of the transient, to the world that is always passing away. Consequently, they will eventually betray the man who has mistaken them for true absolutes.

This is the tragedy of modern life; man has chosen his absolute and his absolute is betraying him. It is betraying him because it is no absolute, but is derived from the stuff of pure relativity. This is the central fact that is determining the spiritual destiny of modern civilization. The crisis of modern civ-

ilization is, in the last analysis, a crisis of man's soul. If we have missed the way, it is because what we have worshipped as our gods were no gods at all, but only man-made images with feet of clay.

The most dynamic movements in contemporary society illustrate man's hunger for an absolute and the consequences of his having mistaken the relative and transient for the absolute and eternal. Perhaps the most striking illustration of this is man's tendency to deify the destiny of the collectivity of which he is part. The deified collectivity may be a class, a race, or a nation. There is for example the world-wide recrudescence of nationalism with its saints and warriors, both East and West, whose methods may differ but whose ends are very much the same. More devotees crowd around the shrine of the National Being than around the shrine of any other god in the modern Pantheon. The purest expression of this cult may be found in Fascism, where the destiny of the Nation-State has become the be-all and end-all in the existence of its citizens, and where every detail of life, from the passport of a musical director to the organization of religious societies or the inauguration of old age insurance, is considered an affair of state and regulated in the interest of the welfare, honor and security of the National Being.

The cult of the National Being when practiced by a highly civilized people is occasionally capable of achieving moments of rare beauty and dignity. But in so far as the National Being has become an absolute for its citizens, in so far as it represents their ultimate social allegiance and their highest social loyalty, and in so far as they twist their ethics to conform to its policy no matter what that policy may be and repeat in unison "My Country, right or wrong," then the cult of the

National Being has degenerated into pure idolatry. Such perverted nationalism is the utter antithesis of the ideal of a coöperative society of nations. Its consciousness of an exclusive destiny is incompatible with a concern for the common good. A world in which every nation worshipped at the shrine of its own Destiny would be a world in which every frontier represented an irrepressible conflict, and in which society would eventually deteriorate into a shambles of irreconcilable egoisms and ambitions. The cult of the National Being is the same as the cult of the God of War.

But perverted nationalism is not the only absolute with which man consoles himself in the absence of a more worthy deity. Communism is in many respects even more significant than Nationalism. In this instance the collectivity which has been deified is the class. The injustices to which a particular class in Russia had been subjected through the centuries were, of course, sufficiently terrible to explain the violence of the Russian Revolution. At the same time it is perfectly evident that Communism represents both in its ideology and in its methods the deification of the destiny of an exclusive collectivity. In this respect the cult of Lenin is as incompatible with the idea of a coöperative society of peoples as the cult of the National Being. Both represent the confusion of a relative and temporal interest with an absolute and eternal reality. The structure of a Soviet Republic or of a Fascist State will eventually harden, as all organizations have a habit of doing, and in the end will betray its devotees as its form proves progressively less capable of adjusting itself to new conditions and changing needs. The degeneration from benevolent oligarchy to despotic tyranny is inevitable whenever men deify the organizational structure of their collectivity. And when they awake to

the fact that a tyranny has come, that the God whom they adored is no God at all but a mechanical demon by whom they have been enslaved, it will be too late to save themselves except by further use of violence.

It is customary for us in America to congratulate ourselves upon our freedom from all idolatries of this sort. The truth is that we are as prone to idol worship, to the deification of immediate group interests, as any other people. The Russians and the Italians may have given expression to their worship of the collectivity in more concrete form, they may be more conscious of the ends which they seek, but they do not surpass us in the depth of their faith or in the tenacity with which it is held. We, too, have deified ephemeral aspects of American society which we have mistaken for eternal realities.

Two of our most prevalent pseudo-absolutes are the idea of unlimited opportunity for everyone and the idea of progressive standards of living for the whole community. We assume these two ideas as an essential part of our unconscious social heritage. We tend to identify them with the grain of the universe. We even confuse them with the coming of the Kingdom of God. Then suddenly a world war intervenes, followed by a world depression. Circumstances which we have not foreseen arise. A surplus population, increased capacity to produce and a shrinking world market, change completely the outlines of the economic universe to which we had become accustomed. Limits are established to expansion. There is no longer unlimited opportunity for everybody, and standards of living cease to be progressive. The absolutes on which we have relied have deceived us. They are seen to be mere fleeting relativities. The structure of the universe which our minds erected proves to have been an hallucination. But since it is the

only universe many of us ever knew, and since we staked our hopes and dreams upon it, its collapse has produced widespread spiritual disaster. When man's gods betray him he is done for. The suicides among the metropolitan middle classes are one commentary upon the desperate character of his plight.

There are many other indications that man's deification of the destiny of his collectivity has released tremendously powerful forces in the life of the modern world, and that these forces in so far as they secure the ascendancy, will drive civilization straight to destruction. In spite of recent gains in official coöperation between governments these forces are at work pulling the nations in exactly opposite directions. There is the extraordinary spectacle of governments which continue to lead the world in movements towards pacification, being forced by circumstances over which they apparently have no control, to adopt financial and economic policies which in the long run will inevitably create a conflict of vital national interests and endanger the peace of the world. The tendency during the last few months in the direction of utilizing national frontiers more generally as barriers to import trade may be unavoidable in some countries in the interests of immediate national security. But it is a more tragic event than even the World War itself. Generations of heroic effort and much bloodshed had been required to secure as much freedom of movement for the world's trade as there was in 1914. The work of centuries is in danger of being undone in decades. If the tendency to identify national trade with national destiny continues, the dream of a coöperative society of nations will rapidly vanish before the hard reality of a world in which the nations have become hostile armed camps.

But it would be a mistake to suppose that all, or even the greater part, of mankind has chosen as its absolute the destiny of the collectivity of which it forms a part. Many men who have lost their faith in the absolutes of another world and are too sophisticated to be deceived by the social pseudo-absolutes of this world, attempt to face life single-handed with heads bloody but unbowed. The silent Stoic is a noble spectacle. But there are few who have iron enough to play the role through. Most of those who essay to do so end by adopting as their absolute their own tastes and interests. They go out into life alone, under the guidance of their ego, to follow wherever its tastes and interests may lead. Lacking the sense of direction which comes from a clearly defined social purpose, shorn of the dignity which is derived from identification with a great cause, they presently find themselves caught in the flux, the hopeless victims of the next thing. They may be able, by ceaseless activity, to preserve their sanity and even maintain a show of spirit, but they know in their heart of hearts that as a guide to life the human ego is a fraud, and that under its tutelage life loses all meaning.

Such are some of the consequences in modern life of man's hunger for an absolute, and of his mistake in supposing that he would find his absolute within the frontiers of this world. Man must have an absolute to which his life can be referred, which will furnish an adequate object for his emotions and an adequate incentive to his will. But he will search in vain in the world of the relative and the temporal for reliable material out of which such an absolute can be constructed. All attempts to do so are foredoomed to produce disillusion and despair. The true home of the absolute is in the world which lies beyond the frontiers of the world of momentary sense experi-

ence. Through experience man may learn to attach significance to the reality of that other world, and even to incarnate some of its values. But human experience cannot create that reality or evolve those values. The world of the absolute supplies man with its resources, but these resources cannot be manufactured by man.

The supreme spiritual need of these middle years of the twentieth century is for man to learn to distinguish between time and eternity, for him to discover once more the meaning of his eternal home. Unless modern man makes this discovery human nature will lose its beauty and dignity, and human relations will revert to the relations of beasts. Before the foundations of a world society can be securely laid man must enter into eternal life, he must partake of that life which exists in its own right and has its own intrinsic value unconditioned by the Capitalist system, the Fascist system, the Communist system or any other system conceived of by man. He must enter into a world whose laws are not contingent upon the necessities of the industrial machine, or upon the pressures of any interest group, or upon the orientation of any foreign policy.

What are the prospects that man will learn to enter into this eternal world of the spirit, that he will learn to distinguish between time and eternity, and discover the true and reliable absolutes upon which to build his life? It is obvious, that at the moment there are no indications of any general movement of mankind in that direction. Man has committed himself, body and soul, to the gods of his own making and he will not turn elsewhere until his disillusionment is complete and he has suffered the full consequences of the fact that his gods have betrayed him.

There is already some evidence, however, that although man may not have resumed his search for the true God, he is at least losing his confidence in the present objects of his devotion. Tillich says that in northern Europe man is becoming uncertain of his autonomy. In America he is becoming uncertain of his self-sufficiency and adequacy. The universe upon which man has relied has proved to be thoroughly unreliable. It is inevitable that as soon as the logic of this fact works its way through, the loss of nerve will increase, the discontent will grow. We are probably on the verge of some great trek of the human soul. Man was made for God, for the true God, and his heart is restless until it finds its rest in Him. There are the first faint rustling sounds of folding tents. Any day our section of the human caravan may be on the move. Where will we go? Will we simply transfer our allegiance to some new man-made deity or will we have the courage and faith to go out, like the patriarch of old, not knowing where we are going, but looking for that city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God?

The answer to these questions depends primarily upon whether the Christian community can give a vital flesh-and-blood demonstration of its faith in the years just ahead. Considering the broken and disrupted state of the Christian Church, its intellectual confusion and its ethical impotence, this seems like an astounding and even somewhat absurd statement to make. Yet it is the truest statement that can be made about the future of human society. The Christian faith is the only faith adequate for man's needs. It is the only living world religion. It possesses the philosophical truth, the ethical passion, and the religious insight upon which an enduring society can be built.

But the full truth and significance of the Christian faith will not break upon the world, unless those who proclaim it realize that in its essence it is faith in the world of the eternal and the absolute, rather than in the world of the relative and the temporal—it is faith in God's world and not in man's world—it is faith in the realities and the values of the unseen and not in the shadows and the stratagems of the seen. In recent years large sections of the Christian community have failed to insist upon this distinction. The result is that the Church itself has not infrequently identified its faith with the acceptance of some man-made panacea, with the consequence that the public has lost confidence in its integrity, in proportion as the panacea has failed to cure. The fate of the Christian faith in our time is in the hands of the Christian community. That community must choose between the historic insistence of the Church upon the distinction between man's world and a world not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and the modern tendency to think of one wholly humanized world as comprising all of reality. If the Christian community chooses the second alternative, its fate will be to disappear with the civilization whose hand-maid it has become. If the Christian community chooses the first alternative, it will continue its glorious task of redeeming mankind; it will not make a new civilization but it will make the makers of a new civilization; it will lay the foundations for a coöperative world society.

The Christian faith is the supreme need of the modern world. It frees man from the superstition that his own destiny is identical with the destiny of any particular system or theory of society. At the same time it powerfully influences his conduct, both as an individual and as a citizen. For the

"other world" in which the Christian believes is not a safe retreat in which he can take refuge from the struggles and defeats of this world. On the contrary it is a world whose forces are ever invading this world. It is a world of creative initiative and transforming energy. Its impact on this world means ceaseless change; change that is radical and redemptive, not merely partial and palliative. Its impact on this world releases revolutionary forces, but revolutionary forces whose method is that of the cross, rather than that of the barricade.

The modern man looks out upon the universe and sees across its spaces the projection of his own image. He looks expecting to see his stature magnified in the reflection that comes back to him. But he is disappointed. Where he had thought to see a giant he sees only a dwarf.

The Christian looks out upon the universe and sees not the projection of his own image but the image of Another; he sees the reality which is summed up for him in the life of God, as he knows it in Jesus Christ. He sees that reality as a spirit infinite and eternal. In the presence of that reality he sees himself as he is. He senses the gulf that separates himself from God. He knows the difference between the pure and the impure, the holy and the unholy. The Christian maintains that this image of Another is not a projection of his imagination but a fact of history. He is convinced that the reality of the other world, of that absolute and eternal world in which he believes, once found its full expression in the life of a man; that God was in Jesus Christ reconciling the world to himself. The Christian affirms that the absolute has assumed relativity, that the eternal has assumed temporality, that God has entered the time stream. He believes that where God's foot touches the time stream there is a cross, and that this cross symbol-

izes an eternal fact in God's relations with men. But he does not admit that the cross is the last word, for beyond the cross he sees the resurrection as the justification of his faith and hope.

For the Christian, the God and Father of Jesus Christ is the creator and sustainer of all things, visible and invisible. He sees evidences of God's creative energy at work throughout the whole order of nature, but he finds this energy perfectly expressed in the mind and spirit of Jesus. The life of Jesus has made clear to him the tremendous antithesis between God's will and man's will. He feels the tension in human society, between the way of God and the way of man. He sees that men are for the most part committed to the *status quo* and to perpetuating the injustices which the maintenance of the *status quo* entails, but he knows that the God of Jesus is in eternal conflict with the God of Things As They Are. The Christian realizes that those who worship the God of Jesus will necessarily participate in this conflict. His experience of life has taught him that in such a struggle individuals and groups often meet with defeat and sometimes with death, but he believes that even in defeat victory of a kind is possible, and that death itself may lead to much more glorious life. Beyond the bounds of time and space he sees a new heaven and a new earth into which he can enter now by faith, regardless of the shifting fortunes of this mortal world, and by entering it he is equipped for the tasks of his day and generation.

Men who held this faith could turn the world upside down. Men who held this faith could lay the foundations of a world society.

The Christian faith is essentially a Catholic faith—to express it at all, one must express it in universal terms. If the

logic of Marxian teaching is the Communist Internationale, it is even more true to say that the logic of the New Testament is an organic self-conscious world society of those who accept the Christian faith and are trying to live the Christian life. Geographical, racial and social barriers, such as commonly divide mankind, are not barriers between the members of this society. Their outlook on the world has perhaps never been better described than by the author of the Epistle to Diognetus, writing more than seventeen hundred years ago. In describing the Christians for his friend, Diognetus, he said, "They dwell in their own countries, but only as sojourners; they bear their share in all things as citizens, and they endure all hardships as strangers. Every foreign country is a fatherland to them, and every fatherland is foreign. In a word, what the soul is in a body this the Christians are in the world. The soul hath its abode in the body, and yet it is not of the body, so Christians have their abode in the world, and yet they are not of the world."

A world fellowship composed of people who answered to this description would be a powerful factor in preparing the way for a coöperative society of nations. The creative intercourse between members of the fellowship across national and racial boundaries, the collaboration of widely scattered local groups for international ends, the growing consciousness of a community of faith and interest independent of political and economic necessities; all of this would contribute towards the development of the attitudes and skill essential to a world society. From such activity, from such faith, from such willingness to risk all in the interests of the Kingdom of God, would come the men and women who could be relied upon to guide man's caravan to its next stage. The first need of the world society is citizens. An organic world community of Christians

would provide an incomparable training ground for citizens of the world society.

How is a world community of Christians to come into being? The history of the Church shows that great reformation movements have sometimes been initiated by laymen, and sometimes by priests and pastors. It seems probable, however, that in this instance the initiative is more likely to come from lay members of the church since they are more mobile and, if radically inclined, are less inhibited by the national or racial character of their respective denominations. Those who believe, therefore, that the Christian faith has lost none of its ancient power and that it supplies exactly what the world needs at the present hour have the right to expect that within the next generation or two a dynamic movement of Christian laymen will appear, a movement world-wide in extent, Catholic in its outlook and deeply rooted in the essential truths of the Christian faith. It is conceivable that a movement of this kind might give the demonstration which the world needs, that it might supply the spiritual and ethical resources necessary for the development of a coöperative society of nations.

Christian statesmen from many lands and representing every section of the Christian church have been, for more than a generation, preparing the way for such a movement. The existence of the conferences at Jerusalem, Stockholm and Lausanne, and the history of the vital forces which they represent, is evidence of the fact that the tides of God are moving in that direction.

Civilization itself has set the stage for the reappearance of Christendom. During the last quarter of a century, in spite of the wide-spread recrudescence of national particularism, the economic and financial foundations of a world society have

been laid. The dominant forces which control the destiny of modern civilization are world forces. They are not peculiar to any one nation or to any one race. They spring spontaneously from the resources, the interests and the skill of every continent, and they operate on an inter-continental plane. If Christianity in its organizational expression prefers to function as the peculiar institution of special nations or races, it will cease to play a significant part in the history of the twentieth century. If it can begin to function on the same plane as modern civilization, it stands a chance of being able to come to grips with the forces that control that civilization.

The events of the past few months make this possibility seem at times very remote, yet there is encouragement in the fact that whereas large sections of mankind have in recent years refused to face the abyss towards which they were moving, that abyss is now staring them in the face. We cannot avoid any longer taking stock of our situation. We are beginning to realize that a world like this one could not exist, unless there was something profoundly wrong with our philosophy of life. This realization is the initial stage in an understanding of the Christian faith. It is the moment when man is most apt to hear the voice of God. If God speaks and man answers, anything is possible. Given the present world situation, and responsiveness among a few people to the divine initiative, a world-wide Christian movement will inevitably come. What can we do to prepare for its coming? What group is in the most strategic position to act as the vanguard of a world-wide Christian movement? Unquestionably, the most strategic group for an enterprise of this kind is the group of Christian students in the universities. A world student Christian movement would provide a laboratory in which ideology could be per-

fected, skill could be acquired and leadership could be developed.

The World's Student Christian Federation provides a unique instrument for the creation of a world community of Christian students. Under the leadership of Dr. John R. Mott its influence has profoundly affected the movements towards closer coöperation between the Churches. It has often been remarked, how many of the Church leaders who are responsible for the type of inter-church collaboration manifest at Jerusalem, Stockholm and Lausanne, were formerly members of some national student Christian movement affiliated with the Federation. The very nature of the student community means that its members are more open to new ideas, more sensitive to ethical issues, and more responsive to the challenge of a great cause than any other group in society.

Organizationally, the World's Student Christian Federation is what its name implies, a federation of national movements. It was created as an agency of the national movements affiliated with it to serve their purposes, to stimulate international and missionary interests and to facilitate the flow of creative ideas and creative life between the national movements. But the Federation is something more than this. In facilitating the flow of life between national groups, in furthering the process of cross-fertilization of ideas across national boundaries, a new type of fellowship is brought into being, a fellowship which is not peculiar to any particular race or nation, but which is essentially universal in its outreach. In other words, the very existence and activity of the Federation implies the creation of a World Student Christian Movement. Such a movement is, in a sense, a by-product of the Federation's activity, yet it is a by-product whose value is so great that the significance of

the Federation will no doubt be eventually determined by it.

There is an increasing amount of evidence that the growing consciousness on the part of Christian students and leaders of their participation in an organic world-wide fellowship, is the most impressive single fact in the Federation's life. During the past year and a half every important conference of the Federation confirms such an impression. This is true whether one thinks of the Round Table Conferences of leaders at Zuyenfeld and Williamstown, or of the European Theological Conference at Canterbury, or of the Bantu-European Conference in South Africa, or of the Annual World Conferences at Vaumarcus, or of the Pacific Area Conference at Vancouver, or of the preparation which the Council of European Student Movements is now making for the first All-European Student Conference to be held next spring.

The Federation as an executive agency will, of course, continue to serve as a clearing house between the national movements. Far more important, however, than its executive function is its prophetic mission. This is a mission which cannot be fulfilled by executive action, however perfect that may be. No elected group of officers or secretaries are alone competent to undertake it. Such a mission can only be undertaken and carried through by those to whom the word of God has come. These may be student members of the national movements, they may be officers or secretaries of the Federation, they may be professors in the universities, or national movement secretaries, or committee members. Whoever they are, taken together they will form the pioneer group whose business it is to build, among the Christian students of the world, a sense of their active and creative participation in an organic world community.

An organic world community of Christian students will appear as groups in different lands acquiring a living consciousness of their spiritual unity. This consciousness of spiritual unity will depend upon the extent to which members of these different groups can, (1) think certain things together, and (2) do certain things together. Under the leadership of the Commissions on Message and Oecumenism, many persons associated with the Federation are learning to think certain things together, and because of their concern for the ethical implications of their faith they are beginning to do certain things together. There is the world-wide movement initiated by the Federation to arouse the conscience of Christian students in regard to disarmament. There is also a growing conviction among Federation members that the character of modern industrial society, and the recent trends in the economic policies of governments, provide a field for study and action which should increasingly engage our attention.

The task of building an organic world-wide community of Christian students is not a task for which good will alone is sufficient equipment. There is no more insidious enemy to the ideal of a world society than the assumption that all that is needed to build such a society is a warm glow between representatives of different nations, denominations and races. Such warmth of sentiment may spring from Christian love, but it may equally well spring from sources entirely unrelated and even hostile to Christian faith and conduct. The anti-intellectualism and vapid sentimentality which occasionally characterize world brotherhood movements do not furnish the moral or mental fibre equal to enduring the strain of such an undertaking, nor do they deserve to capture the imagination or command the respect of the ablest students in the universities.

For such a task a certain amount of intellectual intransigence is absolutely necessary. The forces directing the destiny of the nations are stubborn and intractable forces. They will never be ameliorated or diverted except by men who have a clear intellectual alternative to propose, who are thorough-going realists in their estimate of the situation, and who are at the same time consumed by the faith that for God all things are possible.

The World's Student Christian Federation exists to help prepare the way for a world society of Christians. Its responsibility is enormous. Its opportunity is unlimited. Can it fulfill its mission? If the answer had to be given in organizational terms it would be very doubtful. As an executive agency the resources at its disposal are certainly meagre. Yet this is not the whole story. The resources of the Federation, financial, personal and spiritual are, in the last analysis, the resources of the national movements, and these are in their aggregate considerable.

In every national movement the question is becoming more and more insistent, is not the creation of an organic world society of Christians an essential element in the expression of our Christian faith? Is it not true that the existence of such a society conditions the establishment of a coöperative society of nations? And might not a World Student Christian Movement be a decisive factor in preparing the way for such a society?

The motto of the generation that founded the Federation was "The evangelization of the world in this generation." The moral equivalent for our generation is the challenge to build a world society of Christians. Our task is to train the citizens who will constitute the society of nations of the future. Our task is to make the makers of a new civilization. That is a task worthy of the best that we can give. It is God's will for our time.

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